764 When the last chicken has been offered, the body is wrapped in a very pliant mat and bound tightly to the stretcher. The funeral procession gets underway. The women and children walk ahead of the body, and the friends and village people follow with the drummers. If the deceased was an important person, horsemen join the procession and guns bark. If the deceased was the head of the household, the procession winds around the soukala three times. Women, who are never heads of a household, are not granted this honor. Then the procession goes toward the grave in a roundabout way, passing by the favorite spots of the deceased: an old woman, for instance, is taken to the place from which she used to fetch water and to the marketplace where she went to sell grain. The drummers bang away, everyone shrieks, sings, and exchanges insults so coarse that no one was willing to repeat them to me. The procession comes to a halt three times if the deceased was an old woman, twice if it was an old man, and the noise rises to a new pitch.

When the procession reaches the grave, everyone stops for the last time and becomes silent. The stretcher is lowered, and the relatives utter a subdued and melancholy chant: "May the chief of hatred (the being who killed the deceased) depart!" The body is laid out near the pit. One of the undertakers, who alone may bury someone who died of illness, stands in the first hole, and another waits in the funeral chamber to receive the body. The cords which bind the corpse to the stretcher are cut, and the mat removed. Those undertakers who are not occupied at the moment stretch blankets around the pit to hide the body from the onlookers. The man in the first hole seizes the corpse and passes it on through the opening of the funeral chamber to the second undertaker, who takes it in his arms, lays it on its side on a mat with the head toward the south and facing east in the case of a man, west in the case of a woman, with the arms and legs folded.

As soon as the corpse has vanished, the blankets are removed, and the eldest son steps forward. He offers the dead man a mourning [801] apron, in the pocket of which he has placed 444 cowries in the case of a woman, 333 in the case of a man, or even 4,444 or 3,333, according to his means, and the undertaker presents them to the deceased, saying that his eldest son is offering him cowries to buy drinking water (to be translated as beer). He also offers clothing: for a man, two pairs of trousers, two shirts, two blankets, and a cap, if he wishes to do things lavishly; and blankets in the case of a woman, some to

764 be worn, others for carrying jars or to take to market. A woman is also offered a gourd to cook sauce, along with pepper, spices of all sorts, and salt. In addition, she is given the spindle that she used to spin cotton, but first its stem is broken; in fact, everything which is offered to the dead is previously damaged or torn. Wealthy friends also present clothes, and the others toss cowries to the dead. The undertakers carefully cover the smaller hole with blankets to prevent the cowries /71/ from falling into the pit. Every once in a while they allow a few to slide down, but they keep the greater part to themselves. When everyone has tossed in his offering, the undertakers take one, two, or several pieces of clothing; this is their share, and the practice is sanctioned by custom. They also take a few handfuls of cowries from the mourning apron, and someone hastens to count them. All eyes are anxiously focussed on the person who counts them, [80] 787 for either a man or a woman will die soon, depending on whether the number of cowries comes nearer to 333 or to 444.

Finally the undertakers close up the pit. If the deceased was an old woman, the smaller opening is plugged with one of the large jars in which she prepared millet beer; if a man, it is covered with a small jar or sometimes, especially if the opening is larger, with sticks laid as close together as possible. The corpse is thus completely isolated in its funeral chamber. The larger hole is then filled up with the soil removed from the pit. A jar and an earthen sauce pot are placed on top in the case of a woman, an earthen pot and a large stone in the case of a man.

Everyone withdraws to drink, eat, and rest. There is no dancing that night, but they make up for it on the following day and even on the day after that, if the wealth of the deceased permits it. On the second day after the funeral in the case of an old man, on the third day for an old woman, the children and younger brothers of the deceased shave their heads, go to thank those who have helped them, and remove their mourning clothes. There will be no further preoccupation with the deceased until the anniversary festivities or kouré.

[184] Such are the ceremonies which usually attend the death and burial of a married man or woman, those who have children. We say "usually," for all these complex ceremonies may be curtailed and modified to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the region and the customs peculiar to one family or another.

769 In addition to this kourita, if the deceased was head of the household, his oldest daughter, or in her absence, his granddaughter, [184] occasionally plays a role and is also called kourita, but this custom is less widespread. Her mourning clothes are embellished with thin cords of red straw (bini) around the neck and wrists and above the elbow and at the ankles, 13 for a man and 14 for a woman. Around her head she wears cotton threads (pana) which hang down her back like a long tail, ending in a pompon. The first kourita, previously mentioned, sometimes wears these badges also. This second kourita actually has only one task, namely, to plant large millet where her father's huts stood. When the millet is ripe, she sets it aside to use for preparing millet beer on the day of the kouré. Sometimes her position is held for three years, and she cannot shave during this time. To offset this, it is she who brews the beer for the Day of the Dead (basra). At the end of three years, she shaves and takes up her usual way of life. No such kourita is provided for an old woman, since she was not the head of a household.

A mother is kourita for a child who dies before he marries. She wears at her ankle a thin cotton cord to which she adds a knot daily [801] for the duration of mourning, 33 days for a boy, 44 days for a girl.

The Moro Naba has a kourita like other Mossi, but on the day of the kouré a young boy of his family is appointed to represent him for life. This kourita adopts the name of the dead naba, and all through the dry season he goes from canton to canton, as the true Moro Naba could not do in his lifetime. Everywhere he is greeted and entertained with great honors, he receives many gifts, and his men loot what they can. One place only is closed to him, Ouagadougou, the residence of his successor. If they were to meet, one of them would die within the year. At present there are among the Mossi two kourita of Moro Nabas: that of Naba Sanem, who welcomed Binger, and that of Naba Sigri, enthroned as a result of Voulet's conquest and deceased in 1905. Naba Wobro, deposed by our troops, has no kourita because he was [643] no longer Moro Naba when he died; he had failed tradition by leaving Ouagadougou and thereby renounced his rights as a sovereign.

/74/ The first funeral is a temporary expedient; the human body decomposes quickly, and the burial has to be held before all the friends and relatives can be assembled. Also, death comes by surprise; there are not enough cowries, the animals have not been gathered in sufficient numbers, and the deceased must be granted the honors due his rank, he must be offered numerous victims. These are the reasons

782 If a goat, sheep, or beef was sacrificed, the hair on top of the
755 head is pulled out instead of neck feathers, and a piece of the rope used to tie the victim is added. All of this is glued where the blood was shed, and the victim's legs are not broken.

Such is the usual sacrificial formula. Variations are of course introduced by individuals and by the customs of particular regions. This is the mand'zallé.

/93/ The mand'lingdem or mand'dédem, which we might call "hidden sacrifice," is offered for the sake of someone who is ill and on the point of death. His illness is due to the fact that the soul has left his body. The sorcerer has said that it is to be found in the tangandé. Without the sick person's knowledge, hence the name "hidden sacrifice," his father goes to the tangandé, accompanied by another of his children who bears the victim and some water and by the sick person's mother who bears a large gourd half filled with water and a smaller gourd inside it.

The sacrifice is offered as previously described, but while the child is roasting the chicken, the sacrificer tosses onto the ground three cowries in the case of a sick boy, four in the case of a girl, and pours a little water. Then he invokes the sick child by name:
[801] "Bila, come, answer me." He calls three times for a boy, four times for a girl. He then takes the cowries and some of the soil which was soaked with water and the animal's blood. The woman lifts the small gourd which floats in the water, the sacrificer places the mud and cowries at the bottom of the large container, and the woman quickly covers the mixture with the small gourd which she holds down in the water. This procedure is repeated three or four times according to the patient's sex. The woman then heads toward home, holding the container in one hand and still bearing down on the small gourd to prevent it from floating. The sacrificer follows her, waving his sword or spear behind her to ward off the evil spirits. The soul is at the bottom of the water, amid the bloody mud and cowries, and they must do their utmost to prevent it from running away again.

When the procession reaches the patient, he is made to sit up, and the woman pours the water of the large gourd on his head, without lifting the smaller gourd. If the sick person, surprised by this sudden shower, gives a start, it means that he is saved; his soul has re-entered his body. Otherwise, nothing can be done, and the unfortunate person is abandoned to his fate; the tangandé did not want to return the soul.

789 Blessings and curses are also used. Should they be classed with the cult, or with magic? One way or the other, there are natives who have the power to kill anyone merely by saying a word. They can make the harvest wither, the cattle sicken. There are also some who can bless, make a trip propitious, an undertaking successful. If you
752 are wounded, go to them. They will put around the wounded part of
755 your body a greasy rope with three or four knots according to your sex;
801 there will be no swelling, and the wound will heal quickly.

782 Such are the major sacrifices and the practices of the cult. The
769 sacrifices offered to the spirits of the dead on the day of burial or on
796 the day of kouré have not been mentioned, because the animals offered are not properly speaking sacrificed (kou mando) but offered, presented, fabré. We shall now mention the sacrifices made on the Day of the Dead.

The Koupéla Mossi have two major feast days: the Day of the Dead or basra, and the Moslem sheep celebration called kibsa. Both are intimate family affairs.

Basra is the feast of the dead. On that day every family head must offer sacrifices to his ancestral spirits, and he alone may sacrifice upon the grave. Even if a member of the family has become powerful and wealthy, he will not offer the sacrifice which devolves by right to the family head. All members of the family who wish to offer a sacrifice on the ancestral grave must, therefore, go to their elder on that day. Anyone may sacrifice to the kikirsi and tangandé, and almost everyone does at this time. It is mainly on this occasion that little children may be seen gravely sacrificing their chicken to their kikirsi and to the tangandé; each makes it a point of honor to offer his own animal. Only chickens are sacrificed on that day.

Basra is not celebrated by every family on the same day. Some celebrate it before the province chief does, others after him, while most families do it on the same day he does.

/96/ The naba of Koupéla proceeds as described below, and the ceremonies are the same for his subjects with the sole difference that being less wealthy they cannot offer as many sacrifices. The basra is always celebrated by the naba on a Saturday. Already on Thursday he has taken non-fermented beer from the vats and poured it on the graves of his father and grandfather. He has also sacrificed a chicken on each of the tombs. Wherever an ancestor of the naba is buried, the guardian of the grave sacrifices a chicken. This is repeated on

777 may hold in store. Wednesday is unreservedly bad, and you must not start a job or leave for a trip on that day. Thursday and Friday are propitious to weddings, especially Friday. On Saturday the sorcerers take the day off and hold no consultations. In addition, every individual has his own lucky day and his unlucky day, which he must know and bear in mind.

778 787 823 Some stones are said to have fallen from heaven. On the day when they fall, the village chief immediately covers all the jars in his hut which contain charms. If he knocks one down in his haste, he will die within the year. These stones are held sacred. Those who can lift them /100/ have nothing to fear, but those who cannot are soon to die. People may also interrogate such a stone, whose reply is considered favorable if they manage to lift it, unfavorable if they cannot [788] do so. Passersby toss millet stalks onto the stone, or twigs cut along the way, or sometimes cowries, to procure success in their endeavors.

821 787 Comets are omens of war or of the death of a great chief. When Halley's comet appeared on the horizon, the chickens, goats, and sheep had a bad time of it. It was necessary to ward off all the possible misfortunes. It is true that the comet was magnificent, spreading for several days from one end of the sky nearly to another, and it is understandable that the natives should be upset. We have heard that many people were troubled in our civilized countries, where the comet could not be seen in all its splendor. In spite of all those sacrifices, the chief of one of the principal cantons in the province, the naba of Pwitenga, died that very year!

000 We must limit our enumeration, and these few examples, which could easily be multiplied, suffice to make clear the role of amulets and superstitions in the life of this people.

801 One further word on superstitions. The reader may have noticed that the numbers three and four and their composites have recurred constantly according to the sex of the person spoken of. Three is reserved for men and four for women. In the sacrifices, God-king male is called three times. God-king female four times. The cord of the charm has three or four knots according to sex; mothers mourn their children for 33 or 44 days. A dead man receives 333 or 3, 333 cowries, a dead woman 444 or 4, 444, etc.

302 Every time a native changes his status, his hair must be removed. Babies are shaved before they are given a name, girls before they come to their husband, women when they are transferred to a new

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[Pre-World War II Period]

What Maugin referred to euphemistically as "difficulties with the white man" was, to the Mossi, rather drastic punishment for non-payment of taxes. If a man refused to pay his taxes, the Mossi chief was permitted to sequester his goods and sell them. If the man had neither the taxes nor the goods, the chief had to send him and his wife (or wives) to the administrative post to be punished. Sometimes, a man and his wife would be made to look at the sun from sunrise to sunset while intoning the prayer *Ouennam co mam ligidi* ("God, give me money"). Other times, a man would be made to run around the administrative post with his wife on his back; if he had several wives, he had to take each one in turn. Then his wife or wives had to carry him around. The Mossi claim that a man had to run around the post three times, and his wife four. This is probably an exaggeration, however, because the numbers 3 and 4 are symbolically associated with men and women, respectively.

A further source of difficulty for the Mossi chiefs, and one which became more serious as time went by, was that they were charged by the administration to recruit men for both labor and military service. Initially, the chiefs had to supply men to transport grain for the French-organized agricultural societies from one region to another; later, they were commanded to supply labor for private and public works. Labouret states:

> The initial recruitment, which took place in 1912, was carried out without any difficulty, thanks to the unexpected afflux of volunteers. This was not the case in subsequent years. The reason for this was that the credulous natives of these distant regions, lacking any contact with the world, believed that the Europeans were carrying off their most robust youths to sell them to the Men of the Sea [mythical cannibalistic beings].[13]

The Mossi were alarmed at the high rate of mortality among the young men who went away to work. They had a saying, *Nansara toumde di Mossi* ("White man's work eats [kills] people"), and resisted the recruiting attempts of their chiefs. There was, however, less opposition to recruitment for military service, owing in part to the Mossi tradition of warfare. Many Mossi youths served in France during World War I, and additional hundreds served in an African contingent recruited "by an administrator named d'Arboussier, and with the cooperation of the Mogho Naba, to take possession of northern Togoland."[14]

The manner in which the Mossi chiefs administered their territories before the First World War was conditioned by the colonial administrators even when it was not directly controlled by them. The Mogho Naba had gradually lost most of his power, and he had no authority to act without the specific authorization of the French. He retained most of his cere-

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

larger markets there were and are solid stalls which are built and tenanted by merchants. In the small district and village markets, these stalls are built out of millet stalks which offer little but protection against the noonday sun on market days. Men build these structures for their womenfolk and for themselves. Some of the shelters which are not used for trading serve as galleries where the young blades look out and comment on the passing scene. Others are used as meeting places by adult men who sit and discuss all sorts of affairs. Still others are used by the older men, who gather there to arrange marriages between their several families, wait for gifts from younger men who seek wives, or spend a great deal of time reminiscing about their youthful adventures. Those persons who do not have such shelters sit in the sun or use grass lean-tos as protection from the sun.

Except in the large towns, Mossi markets are held between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. every fourth day. In the larger towns there are daily markets, but these remained unimportant until today when they serve a growing urban population. The capital city of Wagadougou now even has an "evening" market which opens about 4:00 P.M. and closes at about 9:00 P.M. In addition, numerous daily markets have sprung up in many of its wards. The three-day markets are, however, the traditional type, and they are still the most numerous through the country. By "three-day market" I mean that a market is held one day, not held over the two following days, and then held again on the next day. These markets also have a 21-day cycle from one *Ragakasanga* or *Rag'kasanga* ("larger market") on a Friday to another *Rag'kasanga* on a Friday three weeks later, a total of seven markets between the two important ones. The people give no adequate explanation for the observance of the three-day cycle or the 21-day cycle. One man did suggest that it took the women three days to prepare beer and this was why markets could not be held more often, but even he did not speculate about the 21-day cycle.[10] This same man did point out, however, that the cycle made little difference to persons who really liked to go to market, since it was possible for

(10) Zahan (1954 : 373) apparently found one of the few Mossi informants with a mystical bent; he reports that the seven three-day cycles of markets in the 21-day cycle have the following significance for the Yatenga people: "The first of these numbers explains the cycle of the person (7 symbolizes the complete person: male [to which the Mossi assign the number 3] and female [to which they assign the number 4], the second that of the creation." He believes that each market starts a new cycle, a beginning and an end: "the seventh market signifies the most perfect equilibrium: the one which exists between the universe, mankind, and the divinity." In a footnote he suggests that this symbolism is not too different among the Dogon, who are "ideologically and geographically close to the Mossi." Peter Hammond, who worked in Ystenga, could not find this kind of symbolism.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

man even refrains from making overtures to a woman whose husband's female relatives may be married to a member of his own lineage. He fears that a wronged husband may have the wives of his lineage brothers recalled, thus causing dissension within and between the two lineages. If none of these complications are present, a man seeks out a person who knows the woman and sends a message declaring his intentions. If the response is favorable, the man then buys four large kola nuts (four being the number for a woman), wraps them together with 44 francs, and send them to his lady. This procedure may be followed on subsequent market days without the two parties ever coming into direct contact with each other. Finally, however, a rendezvous is arranged, and on the pretense of leaving the market to visit a relative for several days, the woman goes instead to her lover's village.

These casual affairs started at the market sometimes become quite serious, and if for any reason they are sanctioned by the relatives of either the man or the woman, they often lead to the breakup of a marriage. And since the market is the place where disputants of any sort most likely come into contact, it is here that fights over "stolen" wives break out.

This pattern of extramarial relationships centering around the market place is so common among the Mossi that the younger men, and even some of the older ones, are disappointed with the "market" when their mistresses do not appear. Mossi men who sit under the shelters around the market place can usually give an inquirer not only the name of a woman, the name and village of her husband and father, but also the name and village of her paramour. Characteristically enough, they are always "ignorant" of the escapades of their own female relatives or of the wives of their lineage members. The only time when men act as though their relatives might be involved in extramarital affairs is when for some purpose or another a man has to recall a wife or daughter who has gone to visit a relative in another village or district. Regardless of how pressing the problem may be, a man will seldom go directly to his father-in-law's house to recall the woman. He goes to the market nearest to his in-laws' village, and seeks his wife there. If he does not find her or any of her relatives, he goes to the part of the market in which people from her village sell their products and sends a message to her family that he will come for her the next day, or that he would like her to come home.

A market place is also one of the best places to look for news of a runaway wife, or of any stranger in an area. The Mossi say that women have footprints like an elephant in that they can be found quite easily, but that the footprints are always clearest in the market.